

Which man shall carry out and by which he shall live. (18:5)

The *mitzvos* were given to us for the sake of life and living. Therefore, if the performance of a *mitzvah* may endanger life – the need to maintain one’s life supersedes his observance of the *mitzvah*. The exceptions to this rule are the three cardinal sins: murder; idol worship; and adultery. A life in which these *mitzvos* are not observed is no life at all. The *Chassidic* Masters derive from this *pasuk* the requirement to observe *mitzvos* with “life” – not apathetically. One should throw all of himself into his *mitzvah* observance. Indeed, it should be the source, the *raison de’etre*, of his life.

Horav Moshe, zl, m’Kubrin, once walked into the *bais hamedrash* where he observed an elderly Jew studying Torah. Every once in a while the man was overtaken by sleep. As he began to lower his head to doze, he immediately jerked his head up and exclaimed (to himself), “What will be with you? In the end, you will die, and you have so much more to accomplish.” This went on for a while. Each time he began to nod off, he berated himself. The *Rebbe* went over to him and said, “You should instead say, ‘We must live!’ A life such as this (without studying Torah) is no life! Focus on the positive.”

Some individuals sleep through life, exhibiting no passion in their religious observance. A cute, but very true, anecdote that might well accompany this behavior is: “Life is a dream – only if one is sleeping.” Otherwise, life is – and should be – exciting. It affords us the opportunity to serve Hashem and develop spiritually, to the point that we will earn a share in *Olam Habba* for ourselves. If we sleep away our life, however, the portion that we receive might become our nightmare.